

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Original) In a network of devices, a method for a querying device to determine the availability of network-connected devices, the method comprising:

at a querying device, building a graphical user interface (GUI) representing the availability of known network-connected devices;
following the building of the GUI, querying the known network-connected devices to determine their availability.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

at a querying device user interface, issuing a command requesting the availability of devices known to be connected to the network; and

wherein building a GUI representing the availability of known network devices includes building the GUI in real-time, in response to querying device user interface command.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2 further comprising:

following the building of the GUI, representing each of the known network-connected devices in the GUI as unavailable.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein querying of the known network-connected devices includes spawning a thread from the querying device to query each of the network-connected devices; and
the method further comprising:

receiving a query reply from a network connected device;
and
in response to receiving a query reply from a network
connected device, changing the GUI representation of that particular
network device to available.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4 further
comprising:

failing to receive a query reply from a network connected
device; and

in response to failing to receive a query reply from a network
connected device, maintaining the GUI representation of the particular
network device as unavailable.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein not
receiving a query reply from a network connected device includes:

accepting a timeout period for each network connected device
query; and

if the timeout period expires before a query reply is received,
determining that the particular network connected device is unavailable.

7. Canceled

8. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein spawning
a thread from the querying device to query each of the known network-
connected devices includes using a function selected from the group

including a Sockets connect function, a ping function, and a NSLookup function.

9. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein spawning a thread from the querying device to query each of the known network-connected devices includes requesting a True/False answer;

wherein receiving a query reply from a network connected device includes returning a True answer; and

wherein changing the GUI representation of that particular network device to available includes changing the GUI representation to available in response to a True answer.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9 further comprising:

returning a False answer if the timeout period expires before a query reply is received for a network connected device; and

wherein maintaining the GUI representation of the particular network device as unavailable includes maintaining the GUI as unavailable in response to the False answer.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein building a graphical user interface (GUI) representing the availability of network includes building a GUI on a computer with a graphical interface; and

wherein issuing commands requesting the availability of the network-connected devices includes requesting the availability of network-connected devices selected from the group including printers, copiers, scanners, faxes, automatic teller machines (ATMs), remote

sensors, virtual private network (VPN) devices, satellite devices, and other computers.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

accepting a periodic refresh command; and

wherein building a GUI representing the availability of known network-connected devices includes refreshing the GUI in response to a refresh command.

13. (Original) In a network of connected devices, a method of building a graphical user interface (GUI) representing the availability of the network-connected devices independent of system timeouts, the method comprising:

from a querying device, building a graphical user interface (GUI) representing the availability of known network-connected devices;

initially representing the network-connected devices as unavailable; and

modifying the GUI to represent available network devices in response to communicating with those particular network-connected devices.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 further comprising:

maintaining the GUI to represent unavailable network devices in response to not communicating with those particular network-connected devices.

15. (Original) In a network of connected devices, a system for displaying network device availability, the system comprising:

a querying device having a graphical user interface (GUI) representing the availability of known network-connected devices, the querying device having a network connection port;

at least one device having a network connection port for communications with the querying device; and

wherein the querying device queries known network-connected devices to determine their availability, following the building of the GUI.

16. (Original) The system of claim 15 wherein the querying device has a user interface to accept commands requesting the availability of the network-connected devices; and

wherein the querying device builds a GUI, in real-time, representing the availability of network devices, in response to commands from the querying device user interface.

17. (Original) The system of claim 16 wherein the GUI initially represents each of the network-connected devices as unavailable.

18. (Original) The system of claim 17 wherein the querying device spawns a thread to query each of the network-connected devices, and in response to receiving a query reply from a network connected device, changes the GUI representation of that particular network connected device to available.

19. (Original) The system of claim 18 wherein the querying device maintains the GUI representation of the particular network device as unavailable, in response to not receiving a query reply from that particular network connected device.

20. (Original) The system of claim 19 wherein the querying device further includes an operating system and a timer configured with a default timeout value;

wherein the querying device maintains the GUI representation of the particular network device as unavailable, in response to not receiving a query reply, as follows:

starting the timer at the beginning of each network connected device query; and

if the timeout period expires before a query reply is received from a network connected device, determining that the particular network connected device is unavailable .

21. Canceled

22. (Original) The system of claim 20 wherein the querying device spawns a thread to query each of the network-connected devices by using function selected from the group including a Sockets connect function, a ping function, and a NSLookup function.

23. (Original) The system of claim 22 wherein the querying device GUI requests a True/False answer in response to each network connected device query;

wherein the querying device GUI receives a True answer from available network-connected devices; and

wherein the querying device GUI changes the representation of that particular network device to available in response to a True answer.

24. (Original) The system of claim 23 wherein the querying device generates a False answer in response to a the timeout period expiring before a query reply is received for a network connected device; and

wherein the querying device GUI maintains the representation of the particular network device as unavailable in response to the False answer.

25. (Original) The system of claim 15 wherein the querying device is a computer and the GUI is represented on a visual display attached to the computer; and

wherein the network-connected devices are selected from the group including printers, copiers, scanners, faxes, automatic teller machines (ATMs), remote sensors, virtual private networks (VPNs), satellite devices, and computers.

26. (Original) The system of 20 wherein the timer is configured with a refresh rate value; and

wherein the querying device accepts commands requesting
the availability of the network-connected devices at the refresh rate value;
and

wherein the querying device refreshes the GUI, in real-time,
in response to the refresh rate value.
